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BRITISH MUSEUM 5 MA 70

A FEW FACTS ABOUT TRAMWAYS.

Seeing from various published remarks upon the subject, that the operation of Street Tramways is very imperfectly understood, the advocates for the system in this district desire to make the following simple statement of facts, with the view of aiding in the formation of a sound and correct PUBLIC OPINION upon the subject.

The Promoters of Street Tramways are prepared for opposition. It is the fate of every improvement to encounter it. Railways were denounced as "visionary." Towns which opposed the approach of them afterwards begged to have branch lines made to them.

The watermen opposed river steamboats. The introduction of gas lamps was opposed for fear we should be blown out of our beds.

But all these "dangerous innovations" have become accomplished facts.

Tramways have, in their turn, been opposed by a section of people in most places as they will be here. But they exist in scores of towns on the Continent, and especially in America. In no city which has possessed them would the inhabitants on any account consent to be deprived of them.

Manchester must not, and will not, lag behind all the chief cities in Christendom.

TRAMWAYS SAVE THE PUBLIC TIME.
TRAMWAYS INCREASE THE PUBLIC COMFORT.

The cause is assailed by the ugly charge of "MONOPOLY."

The supposition that the streets, or any portions of them, are intended to be "monopolised," is entirely fallacious. No body of persons could expect that any portion of the public highways would be given up for their exclusive benefit. The promoters of Tramway Bills do not deny that they expect to *share* in the general benefit arising from their adoption, by being enabled to save in horse power; but they do not seek this share at any body's cost. They contend that the public also will benefit in more than an equal degree.

The ownership of the street is not changed. Even the *use of the surface* is no more monopolised than it is by any cart or carriage passing any given point at any given moment of time.

The whole of the street between the rails, and the surface of the rails themselves, will be as much at the service of the public as at present.

The rails will be placed exactly level with the pavement, so that any vehicle can pass over or along them without the slightest hindrance.

Tramways must conduce to public convenience, for:—In the year 1868 the Tramways of Copenhagen carried over 4,000,000 fares; the population being 160.000 only.

In one year the Tramways of Philadelphia carried 30,000,000 fares.

In the year 1867, six of the street Tramways of New York and Brooklyn conveyed 78,000,000 passengers with 4,830 horses, whilst in London, the "General Omnibus Company" carried only half the number with the use of 6,677 horses. The population of New York is 2,000,000. That of London 3,000,000.

TRAMWAYS SAVE THE PUBLIC MONEY.

This is effected by the greatly reduced wear and tear of the street pavements, and consequently reduced pressure upon the Public Rates, as the pavement of that portion of road used by them is kept in repair at the cost of the Company, and the wear of the other portion is enormously reduced by the omnibus traffic abstracted from it.

The certificates of numerous Road Surveyors attest this fact; and it is matter of surprise that suburban road authorities, of all persons in the world, should oppose Tramways, for such a course is opposed to the interests and convenience of those they represent.

Powers are sought to lay down double lines only in cases where the streets are wide enough to leave clear room for a stream of ordinary traffic on *each side* of the street.

It is said that the streets in America are much wider than English streets. This is not the case. From a comparison of the streets of New York and Philadelphia, and other American cities, with our streets, it is found that America has no advantage over England in this respect.

Let Ratepayers ponder the following fact:—

"Whilst the carriages of the London General Omnibus Company passed over 13,000,000 miles of street, kept in repair by the authorities at the expense of the ratepayers, the carriages of the New York and Brooklyn street railways passed over 11,700,000 miles of street kept in repair at the expense of the companies."

WHY REFUSE A SIMILAR ADVANTAGE HERE?

RATEPAYERS,

do not be led by the blind prejudices of the few into opposing the real interests of this community! Examine these matters for yourselves, and you will find that every objection to this important social movement can be successfully repelled, and will feel it your duty to

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[LANCASHIRE WORTHIES.]

JOHN COLLIER.

["TIM BOBBIN."]

JOHN COLLIER, better known by his famous pseudonym of Tim Bobbin, shares with his contemporary John Byrom whatever honours were gained by the contributions of Lancashire to the English literature of the eighteenth century. When worthy Dr. Aikin published, some seventy years ago, his *Description of the Country round Manchester*, the literary biography of the region was represented by memoirs of Byrom and Collier exclusively, nor does he seem to have been guilty of any glaring oversight. Both were humourists, Collier, however, more distinctly than Byrom; both wrote prose as well as verse; and they were about the first authors of any note—Byrom slightly, Collier conspicuously—to employ the broad, racy, and expressive Lancashire dialect as a literary vehicle. During their lives, Byrom was the more celebrated of the two. The friend of Bentley, the expositor of Jacob Boehmen, in later years the wealthy owner of Kersal, would have probably disclaimed a comparison with the humble schoolmaster of Milnrow. For a long time, however, Tim Bobbin's name has been one very much more familiar to the people of his native county than that of Byrom. This is due partly, perhaps, to Tim Bobbin's character and career, but mainly to the fact that his most successful work was composed in the Lancashire dialect. When Byrom's verse was first admitted into a collection of the British poets, the editor summarily excluded his pieces in the Lancashire dialect, as has been noted in our sketch of that stenographic worthy. "The whirligig of time brings his revenges." For one reader of Byrom's metrical theosophy, there are, and have been, hundreds of Tim Bobbin's *Tummus and Meary*.

At the beginning of 1710, or the close of 1709—the latter the year in which John Byrom proceeded with distinction from Merchant Taylors to Trinity College, Cambridge—the poor village-schoolmaster of Flixton, in Lancashire, had a son born to him, the John Collier afterwards famous as Tim Bobbin. The parish Register of Flixton was examined of late years by Edwin Waugh—who has written from personal exploration two pleasant and picturesque papers on Tim Bobbin's birth-place and cottage respectively—and Mr. Waugh has made it clear that John Collier was baptized in the parish church of Flixton on the 1st of January, 1710, not 1709, the year given in Baines's *History of Lancashire*. In Baines's time, there was still extant the "small house," known as "Richard o' Jones'," in which Tim Bobbin was born. It modestly fronted Urmston Hall, a quaint gabled wood-and-plaster Elizabethan mansion, which has long been a farm house, and which still looks away over the Mersey on a wide expanse of Cheshire meadow ground. Tim Bobbin's birth-place has disappeared; its site is occupied by one of "four or five raw-looking, new-built cottages," tenanted by hand-loom weavers, which disappointed Mr. Waugh's enquiring gaze. In spite of the hand-loom weavers and its vicinity to Manchester, the parish of Flixton is, and always has been, mainly agricultural, presenting the characteristics of a Cheshire rather than a Lancashire district. The literary pilgrimage already referred to was rewarded by few or no traditions of the Colliers. The only other distinct vestige of the residence of the Collier family in Flixton is the baptismal register of an elder brother of Tim Bobbin's, Nathan Collier, in 1706. The schoolmaster of Flixton, John Collier the elder, seems to have come to it from some other quarter, to have left it after a few years, and scarcely a trace of his earthly existence is now to be discovered. Though at Flixton he was merely a schoolmaster, it is certain that he took orders, and at one time of his life had a small curacy somewhere. He supported his family decently, gave them some tincture of education, and had even some thoughts of bringing up his clever young Jack for the church, when his hopes were disappointed and his efforts marred at the age of 40, by the total loss of his sight. Of the elder John Collier nothing more is known than this in addition to what is recorded of him in the few characteristic sentences in which Tim Bobbin has summed up his early autobiography. "In the reign of Queen Anne," quoth Tim, telling his own story in the third person, "he was a boy, and one of the nine children of a poor curate in Lancashire, whose stipend never amounted to thirty pounds a year, and consequently the family must feel the iron teeth of penury with a witness. These, indeed, were sometimes blunted by the charitable disposition of the good rector (the Rev. Mr. H——, of W—n). So thus T. B. lived as some other boys did, content with water-pottage, buttermilk, and jannock, till he was between 13 and 14 years of age, when Providence began to smile on him in his advancement to a pair of Dutch looms, when he met with treacle in his pottage, and sometimes a little in his buttermilk, or spread on his jannock. However, the reflection of his father's circumstances (which now and then still start up and still edge his teeth) make him believe that Pluralists are no good Christians." The remembrance of his poor father, blind and half-starved, with nine children to bring up, and only thirty pounds a year to do it on, often recurred to Tim Bobbin when he saw reverend gentlemen around him growing obese and apoplectic on their pluralities or otherwise, and many a gibe he shot at them with his satirical tongue and pen in after-life, as he passed them on the road. It was not only in Lancashire, or to the eyes of one who had been born and bred a poor curate's son, that these contrasts were visible and offensive in the England of the first half of the eighteenth century. Tim Bobbin had scarcely begun to make himself known as a satirist, when a certain Henry Fielding produced his novel of *Joseph Andrews*, with its inimitable portraits of Parson Trulliber and Parson Adams.

"Went 'prentice in May, 1722," is Tim's further account of himself, "to one Johnson, a Dutch-loom weaver, at Newton Moor, in the parish of Mottram, but, hating slavery in all shapes, I, by Divine Providence, on November 19th, 1729, commenced schoolmaster of Milnrow." It seems probable that, half-way or so in his apprenticeship, he persuaded his master to cancel his indentures, and exchanged the sedentary life of a weaver for pretty constant movement as an itinerating schoolmaster. No doubt he had picked up some of the elements of the art of schooling from his father, and had been a quick learner of what the poor schoolmaster of Flixton had to teach him. No doubt, too, he had read his book diligently in the intervals of business at the loom. Whether he would, with his then stock of knowledge, have been a "certificated teacher" in these days is uncertain, but in those there were no National schools, the Trullibers not having then been supplanted by a better and more useful clerical race; and Tim, flinging himself on the world as a travelling schoolmaster, found a tolerable welcome in the district which he selected for his perambulations. Bury, Middleton, Oldham, Rochdale, and the neighbouring villages, are said to have formed the sphere of his pedagogic operations, and at his head-quarters, wherever they may have been, he kept a night as well as a day school. The "factory system" was yet a long way off, and the woollen manufacture, the chief one of the time and district, was carried on at home, family-fashion, in combination with small farming, in the primitive and wholesome way of which Samuel Bamford has given an interesting description in the introduction to his edition of Tim Bobbin's *Tummus and Meary*. A thorough knowledge of the Lancashire dialect, nowhere so pure as in that district, Tim could not fail to acquire as he shifted his tent from village to village, and from an early period he noted down what was quaintest and raciest in its phraseology. The oddities and peculiarities of Lancashire rusticity were forced on his attention, and the eye of the young humourist was not slow to apprehend and seize them. But whatever his acquisitions as learner in the course of his rambling life, his pecuniary gains as a teacher must have been of the slenderest kind. At twenty-one poor Tim was glad to settle down on ten pounds a year, as assistant in a Free school in the village of Milnrow, near Rochdale. The master, a Mr. Pearson, was also the curate of Milnrow, and the whole salary, which he divided with his assistant, was twenty pounds a year. The school was supported by Mr. Townley, of Bellfield, whose son became a steady patron of Tim's during his life, and his biographer after death. According to this gentleman, the ten pounds a year at Milnrow, "Tim considered as a material advance in the world, as he

still could have a night school, which answered very well in that very populous neighbourhood, and was considered by him, too, as a state of independency, a favourite idea ever afterwards with his high spirit. Mr. Pearson not very long afterwards falling a martyr to the gout, my honoured father gave Mr. Collier the school, which not only made him happy in the thought of being more independent, but made him consider himself a rich man." Horace, in his Sabine farm, was not more contented than Tim Bobbin at Milnrow, with Mr. Townley of Bellfield for his Mæcenas. He found himself rich enough to drop the night school, though, at Whitsun and Christmas, he still paid teaching visits to Oldham and Rochdale. His affluent leisure he turned to good account; and "self-culture" was familiar to him as a fact, though the phrase itself had not been invented in his day. He learned the theory of drawing, for the practice of which Nature had given him a genius of his own. He taught himself to play "the hautboy and the common flute" so as to perform skilfully on both. He began to scribble, in prose and rhyme, little squibs on the fools and knaves of his acquaintance, and to draw heads from Nature, always with a twist of caricature or the grotesque. His society was courted by high and low, and probably, during the first ten or fifteen years of his new situation, there was not a happier young fellow in England than Mr. John Collier, schoolmaster of Milnrow. He seems, too, to have been a bit of a buck, and what with his village dandyism, his talents and accomplishments, and his twenty pounds a year of certain income, he was looked upon as a desirable match by the lasses of Milnrow and the neighbourhood.

The conquering heroine came at last in the person of a Miss Mary Clay, a handsome young woman of good upbringing and connections. She was the daughter of "Mr. Clay of Flockton, near Huddersfield," and "had been brought up at Tedyham, the seat of Lady Betty Hastings," a statement which has a promising sound. Furthermore, ere she arrived on the visit to Mr. Butterworth, at Milnrow, during which she captivated the young schoolmaster thereof, she had received a metropolitan polish during a stay of several years in London with her aunt, Mrs. Pitt, "a woman of property, and married to Mr. Pitt, an officer in the Tower." Such a damsel as this descending from the splendours of London on rustic Milnrow found, of course, many admirers, and it is to her credit that "schoolmaster" was the happy man. On the 1st of April, 1744, they were married at Helmsley, and an excellent wife she proved to Tim, who needed, as it turned out, as much of the guardian as of the angel in his spouse. They settled down, one supposes, in the house which is, or very lately was, standing, and which has been lovingly described by Edwin Waugh in his paper on Tim Bobbin's Cottage. The old village of Milnrow, a mile and a half from Rochdale, "lies in the ground not unlike a tall tree laid lengthwise in a valley by a river-side. At the bridge its roots spread themselves in clots and fibrous shoots in all directions, while the almost branchless trunk runs up, with a little bend, above half a mile towards Oldham, where it again spreads itself out in an umbrageous way on the little fold called Butterworth Hall," hard by an old manor-house of the Byroms. About twenty yards from the west end of the bridge aforesaid, spanning the little river Beal, "a lane leads, between the ends of the dwelling-houses, down to the water-side. There still," *i.e.*, at the time of Mr. Waugh's visit, "stands the quaint, substantial cottage of John Collier, in the old garden by the edge of the river." We hear of the "uncommon thickness of the walls," the number and superior arrangement of the rooms, and "the remains of a fine old staircase;" also that Tim used to decorate with the flowers of each season the "parlour, a little oblong room, low in the roof, and dimly lighted by a small window from the garden." Best of all, he had "a green-shaded walk from the school into his garden," and in the corner of this was "a roomy green arbour, with a smooth stone table in the middle, on which lay his books, his flute, or his meals, as he was in the mood. The lads used to bring their tasks from the school to the arbour for Tim to examine." The Savages and Boyses, his contemporaries, in their Grub Street garrets, spunging-houses, and reeking taverns, might have envied Tim Bobbin in his Lancashire cottage and garden, on the bank of the little river Beal.

Tim's idyllic existence, however, was not one of perfect innocence. From Aunt Pitt, Miss Mary Clay brought with her into wedded life not only "several silk gowns and other elegant articles of female attire," the envy, probably, of surrounding matrons, but a portion of three hundred pounds. For ninety-nine men who can stand adversity, only one can stand prosperity, and Tim Bobbin's was not the one man's case and fate. The three hundred pounds, according to biographical tradition, melted away in irregular joviality, and not till after they were fairly gone was Tim himself again. His amendment, however, was so marked, and his wife so sensible, that she professed herself heartily glad that the money was all spent. A little family, too, began to grow up about their knees, and Tim had to bestir himself to make both ends meet. It was to his pencil rather than to his pen, though the latter was seldom long idle, that he betook himself, and altar pieces for country churches and signs for inns flowed in profusion from his prolific and impartial brush. When this vein was well nigh worked out he turned to caricature and the grotesque, and even in that unartistic region the original power which he displayed made itself gradually felt. Tim shone in quantity as well as quality, and by dint of assiduous practice could, when he chose, turn out a head in a day or two, and a group in a week. He carried his performances, with the lowest prices affixed, to a well-frequented inn at Rochdale or elsewhere, on the great road to Yorkshire. The friendly innkeeper was always ready to act the part of salesman, sometimes to make advances, and Tim's grotesques found purchasers, on speculation or otherwise, among the "riders," as the "commercial gentlemen" of those days were called, who journeyed from mart to mart on horseback, with samples and patterns in their saddlebags. Sometimes he had his works engraved, and could thus reach more distant markets: one characteristic series which appeared in this way, the "Human Passions delineated," full of spirit and rough humour, has been republished in Manchester within the last twelve years. Meanwhile, his pen was throwing off many little pieces, in prose and rhyme, almost always satirical, and the bibliography of which has been much neglected. It seems to have been about the year 1750 that he published his famous *Tummus and Meary*, the first genuine Lancashire classic, which was immediately successful, though poor Tim was robbed of a portion of his profits by the piracy of knavish booksellers and printers. He lived to see a fifth edition of it published under his own auspices, and innumerable editions of it have kept appearing down to our own day. Besides possessing obvious claims to perennial popularity in Lancashire, *Tummus and Meary* has a philological value as a specimen of the Lancashire dialect as spoken at a time and in a district when it had received few alien admixtures. Mr. Bamford, indeed, has detected in Tim's Lancashire several distinct importations from the Cheshire dialect, which may naturally have overflowed into the language of the inhabitants of Flixton, where Tim's boyhood was passed, not to speak of Mottram, where he was a weaver in early youth. By critics less keen this adulteration will scarcely be noticed, and while the dialect of Lancashire, as of other counties, continues to be studied, Tim Bobbin's broad and racy dialogue will long remain "the standard work on the subject." It was in the title page of this dialogue, apparently, that Collier first dubbed himself "Tim Bobbin," the pseudonym which has almost obliterated his real name, just as Proctor is forgotten in Barry Cornwall and the Rev. Francis Mahony in Father Prout.

Teaching, toping, painting, writing, a welcome guest in inn and hall, journeying sometimes as far as Newcastle and Liverpool to enjoy the hospitality of distant admirers, but ever keeping an eye to business and the sale of his heads, Tim Bobbin passed the remainder of his days with few vicissitudes more striking than the arrival of a new child, or an illness brought on by over-potations, and otherwise punished, very properly, by a sound rating from his wife. Only one episode in the rest of his life is worth chronicling, and it is highly characteristic of the man. It seems to have been at the zenith of his fame, probably soon after the publication of *Tummas and Meary*, that Tim received and accepted an offer of "commercial employment" from a Mr. Hill, of Kibroyd and Halifax, one of the largest cloth manufacturers and merchants in Yorkshire. This manufacturing magnate was induced to make the offer partly from a wish to enjoy Tim's droll conversation, but partly also because the schoolmaster had some of the qualifications of a good clerk. Tim was not only, like Michael Cassio, a great arithmetician, but he wrote a hand literally like print, and, indeed, it seems very probable that in early days Tim had taught many a Lancashire child to read without books, by spelling out sentences written in his own beautiful hand, in perfect imitation of print. Tim accepted the Yorkshire offer, though with a sad heart and doleful presentiments. The Mr. Townley

who became his biographer, and who meanwhile had become patron of the Milnrow school, records that, when Tim called to take his leave before starting for Yorkshire, he wept, and "besought me not to be hasty in filling up the vacancy in that school, where he had lived so many years contented and happy; for he had already some forebodings that he should never relish his new situation and new occupation." It was for the sake of his "wife and family," of course—the old story—that he left, poor Tim pleaded, with tears in his eyes; and, there being two other free schools in the district, the kind Townley gave and kept the desired promise. Setting forth with wife and children, with bag and baggage, Tim arrived at his destination, and was soon duly invested at Kibroyd with the dignity and emoluments of Mr. Hill's head clerk. The agreement was for several years, but a few months of "the desk's dull wood" was enough for Tim. Some of his letters of this period to friends have been preserved; in one of them he breaks out: "It is true I have more than double the salary than for swaying the birchen sceptre at Milnrow, and a grand house rent free; ah, my friend! what are these to pleasing liberty, to sweet, to calm contentment?" In another he complains they are "conspiring to make me rich; I am almost sick when I hear two sixpences jingle together, and ready to swear at the sight of a guinea." Before the first year of the engagement had expired the agreement was cancelled, and Tim, as happy as a king, was in his old cottage and school again, listening to the placid murmur of the little river Beal. To make up for the loss of salary, Tim redoubled his diligence with his brush, and the walls of his Royal Academy Exhibition—to wit, the inns of Rochdale and Littleborough—were soon peopled more thickly than ever with the "ugly, grinning old fellows, and mumbling old women on broomsticks," which Mr. Townley briefly describes as the *genre* in which the Lancashire Hogarth excelled.

Tim quitted Milnrow as a residence no more, until, in his 77th year, he took up his final abode in Rochdale Churchyard. He died at Milnrow, on the 14th of July, 1786, and was buried beside his wife, whom he had some years survived. They had reared four sons and five daughters, and the youngest son, Charles, settled in Kendal, had prospered, and, purchasing the cottage in which they lived, presented it to his parents for their lifetimes. Tim's last production, apparently published not long before his death, was also his most serious one. He is, and always will be known as, a depicter of rustic humours, with pen as well as pencil—a sort of Lancashire Teniers or Ostade. But his latest pieces, two sets of *Remarks on Whitaker's History of Manchester*, show him to have been a man of varied and somewhat recondite reading, and to have possessed powers of mind that, under other circumstances, might have gained him a reputation in what it used to be fashionable to call "the higher walks of literature."

ARE ARTISTS THE ONLY JUDGES OF ART?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SPHINX.

DEAR SIR,—I have read with interest the letter signed "Atechnos," in the last number of the *Sphinx*, on the notice of Mr. Rickards's collection of pictures, and as your correspondent is evidently in earnest, I wish to explain what I think are errors in his letter. He accuses me of referring to "the thoughts and sayings on art matters of all who are only amateurs or non-professionals, in a tone of withering contempt." On referring to the article I find that I alluded twice to "non-professionals." On the first occasion saying, that Mr. Watts's pictures are often called "unfinished," by atechnics, which is simply a fact; I believed them to be mistaken and gave my reasons. The second mention of "non-professionals was to the effect that the picture called Time, Death, and Judgment, would no doubt be considered the finest by *many* non-professional observers, because it contains the greatest number of figures." This I said intentionally, because a writer in the late controversy on the prize picture at the Royal Insitution considered one of the works in dispute superior to the other, for the reason that it contained more figures; and I fear he is not the only one holding such an opinion, though I should be sorry to think or say that all atechnics do.

Again I am attacked, and the ghosts of the great amateurs of Rome, Venice, and Florence, and of all those who have been found willing to sell their birthrights in the cause of art, are called upon to rise from their graves in judgment on me, because I said of a picture that, "though one of the finest, it was not likely to interest any but artists." I write of things as they are at present, and have yet to learn that kings, nobles, and princes, in this, the nineteenth century, do much to "foster, revive, or even create, a taste for art," at least here in England. And after all there is surely no "contempt" shown in that remark towards non-professionals. If the chief merit of a work be technical, I cannot see how it should be thought insulting to say that it is not likely to interest atechnics.

Without claiming infallibility for artists, I maintain that by reason of their technical knowledge, and giving their lives to the study and practice of art, they are the best judges of paintings, as much as a physician is the best judge of the nature of a disease, or a musician of a symphony, or an architect of the construction of a house. I do not for one momeut say that the opinion of amateurs or atechnics is of no value; but that value depends upon how far they are educated in art, and whether their criticisms be confined to the qualities of a picture they are competent to criticize. I cannot believe that the popes, kings, and nobles whom "Atechnos" mentions, or even Lorenzo the Magnificent, criticized the works of the painters of their time with the recklessness so common among our "non-professionals." "Atechnos" has only to stand in an Exhibition for an hour, to hear questions of all kinds, drawing, colour, composition, or execution, decided without hesitation by people whose knowledge of art is in many cases derived from a few lessons in drawing, an annual visit to the Royal Academy, or the possession of pictures purchased, in too many cases, on the sole recommendation of picture dealers. As a rule it may be said that the more highly cultured in art (especially technically) an amateur is, the more cautious and merciful he will be as a critic, and the same applies to professional painters.—I am, dear sir, yours faithfully,

THE WRITER OF THE ARTICLE ON MR. RICKARDS'S COLLECTION.

THE OLD EXCHANGE AND THE NEW.

TWO years ago, when the agitation anent the Royal Exchange was at its height, and the indignation of its subscribers had just been intensified by the issue of the memorable bye-laws, the author of "On the Rialto" remarked that the committee had many enemies, and, apart from their shareholders, no friends. "They narrowly escaped annihilation by the proposed new Exchange; the country manufacturers beat them, Bark Vowels notwithstanding; the anti-step agitation received the support of over three thousand subscribers; are they quite determined that, when the new building is erected, the Trade of Lancashire will be on strike, and refuse to enter it?" It will hardly be considered superfluous to recall these words at a moment when the struggle to which they had reference is about to be renewed. They accurately describe the mingled feelings of indignation and contempt which prevailed at the time they were written; and although the irritation and dissatisfaction are latent now, it remains to be seen whether the anticipation embodied in the closing sentence may not even yet be realized, if a favourable alternative choice presents itself to the constituents of the Exchange Committee.

The objections urged at the time resolved themselves into two divisions—one against the site, the other against certain features of the proposed building. It is well known that, as regards the architectural design, the directors refused to make any concession to the wishes and opinions of the subscribers; and a glance at the new edifice, the exterior of which is slowly advancing towards completion, suffices to show that the original plan is to be carried out in its integrity. All its objectionable features are there: the shops, the obnoxious steps, twenty-four to twenty-eight in number, the restaurant on the ground-floor, the location of the principal room, the Exchange proper, in the upper story of the building. The last thing considered, as was urged at the time, appears to have been the convenience of the subscribers. With regard to the site, two reasons only are or can be advanced in favour of the retention of the old locality:—the first, that it *is* the old one, and among its old subscribers, habit has become a second nature; the second, that it is conveniently situated for the cotton brokers, spinners, and manufac-

turers who arrive from Liverpool and East Lancashire by way of the Victoria Station. Beyond this, not a single reason can fairly be urged in favour of the Market Street site.

Let us now see how this question of site affects the new Exchange, the proposed erection of which in Portland Street we announced last week. The plot, as we then stated, consists of 3,000 square yards, and lies between Sir James Watts's warehouse and the fine building recently erected by Mr. Alfred Waterhouse. For many years past the tendency of building for commercial purposes has been in a direction *away* from the Royal Exchange, so that at the present moment the real centre of the warehouse or business portion of Manchester may be most accurately fixed near the Union Club-house, or the Royal Institution. A simple but striking fact will illustrate this. Draw a circle, 400 yards from the centre to the circumference, round the Royal Institution. Within that circle you will comprise probably the most valuable warehouse property in the city; and what with new buildings, alterations, renovations, and the enhanced value of the locality for business purposes, it has been calculated that the increase in the rental of that property during the last four years, is no less than £100,000. The circle selected includes, of course, the new Town Hall, the estimated rental of which has been put down at £20,000; but deducting that we have still the astounding increase of £80,000. Apply a similar test to the vicinity of the Royal Exchange. It will be found that for years past building has been almost stationary, such changes as have been made affecting shops, offices, and establishments only slightly and indirectly connected with the Manchester trade. The simple fact is there is no room for expansion round or near the Royal Exchange; whereas, in the vicinity of the proposed new Exchange, there is not only an immense quantity of inferior house property, but a wide tract of available land, most of which has already been mapped out for the erection of warehouses, and some of which is already covered with pioneer buildings of this class. It is more than probable (the land having already been surveyed for the purpose) that the extensive area at present occupied by Sir Joseph Whitworth's works, between Canal Street, Zara Street, Granby Row, and Chorlton Street, will be covered with warehouses before five years are past; and the whole district is, in fact, in process of or destined for reconstruction.

Another point in favour of the new site is the expected provision of greater railway facilities in that direction. In less than a twelvemonth after the proposed opening of the building in Portland Street, the Midland and Manchester and Sheffield Railway Companies will have completed their line of communication with Liverpool. The terminus in Manchester will either be at the Oxford Road Station or at some point adjacent, and thus the Liverpool brokers may be landed within two or three minutes' walk from the new Exchange. Similarly, by the opening of a direct street between the London Road and Oxford Road stations, which is, we believe, one of the inevitable town improvements of the future, the spinners and manufacturers from Stockport, Ashton, Hyde, Macclesfield, and neighbouring towns in that quarter will have easy access to the Portland Street building, the situation of which will to them prove a great convenience and no inconsiderable saving of time.

About the unpleasant embarrassment which the existence of two Exchanges must inevitably cause, nothing useful can be said at present. It is a difficulty which time alone can solve. But for the rest, balancing judicially and impartially the considerations which tell for and against the respective sites and the rival buildings, the advantages seem to us to incline very decidedly in favour of the Portland Street project. The new Exchange, when erected, will be contiguous to the centre of the warehouse or business portion of the city, and, if the tendency of building operations is any criterion, will soon be the centre itself. It will be within a few minutes' walk of four of the railway termini—the Sheffield, the London and North Western, the Bowdon, and the new Liverpool line. As regards the edifice, it will be built for the one sole object in view; it will have no subsidiary shops, or restaurants, or wine and bitter beer depôts, unpleasantly prominent, and occupying the best positions in the building; and the Exchange proper will be where it should be—on the ground-floor, and easy of access from every side. Being so placed, and with no superstructure above, the provision of those indispensable but impalpable commodities, light, air, and space, will be as abundant as the most sanguine could desire. In short, it promises to be what the promoters desire to make it, the exact opposite of the (old) Royal building, which the writer already quoted once described as "this precious Exchange, believed on all hands to be the very worst in Europe, and known to be the most illiberally conducted."

TOWN TALK,

AND THINGS IN GENERAL.

HOSPITAL SUNDAY.

WHILE all the other papers are going into rhapsodies over the simultaneous collection scheme, we would draw the attention of the reflective portion of the community to the grave defects inherent in its constitution. The proceeds of the whole organization are to be handed over to a self-constituted committee of clergymen and clergymen's nominees, who are to have the sole and irresponsible disposal of it. A tax—a voluntary tax, but still a tax—is to be levied upon most of the church-goers of this district, who are not to be allowed the smallest voice in the distribution of their own property. We doubt whether so unconstitutional a proceeding could, in this town and at this time of day, have originated anywhere but at a conclave of the clergy. It is true, the names of a few laymen are connected with the movement—catch a parson being a treasurer—but the whole affair is practically got up by the clergy, and their hand is visible in it throughout. The appointment of the lay committee-men by the clerical committee-men, is clearly the result of inspiration. Nothing but the laying on of hands could have put into the mind of man so specious a pretence of giving other people power whilst really keeping it oneself. Can't the parsons see that they are just endeavouring to resuscitate that against which all England's past has been one struggle? Will nothing bring the clergy level with the age they live in? The idea of government which they are carrying out, in the way in which the movement has been organized, got its head scotched when King John signed Magna Charta, and was executed with King Charles.

THE "MERCHANT OF VENICE" AT THE PRINCE'S.

Taken as a whole, the *Merchant of Venice*, as produced at the Prince's Theatre, is a very satisfactory performance. All the characters are fairly represented, and some of the company appear to greater advantage than in any previous Shakesperean play. Nothing could be better, for instance, than Mr. Rae's Old Gobbo. Small as the part is, the veteran actor, well seconded by Mr. Edmonds as Launcelot, contrives to make the slight episode, in which alone he appears, an effective incident of the play. Mr. Archer, again, has never shown to so much advantage as in the fine but difficult casket scene. Mr. Calvert's Shylock is a powerful and impressive performance; best, perhaps, in the last act, but in all effective. Though not professedly a "revival," the drama is admirably mounted. Playgoers of the old school will not care much for the spectacular representation of a Venetian carnival, in which the ballet performs a conspicuous part; but the view of Venice in the sixteenth century, the joint work of Mr. Alfred Darbyshire, the architect, and Mr. Robert Pollitt, the eminent artistic decorator, is an excellent piece of scene-painting. With the pantomime as an afterpiece the entertainment is of inordinate length; and on Saturday and Monday the patience of the audience was, in addition, severely taxed by the long delay between the several acts.

THE TAX-GATHERER AND THE REAL POOR.

Taxes are at best an infliction—a negative one to the rich, but a positive one to the poor, *i.e.*, the lower middle classes who, and not the working classes, are the real poor of the country. Naturally enough the Poor Rate falls heaviest on the pockets and tempers of the poor, and consequently this modern "benevolence" requires a more keenly biting screw than other imposts. It seems a somewhat ungracious task to haul over the coals those whom we pay to put the screw on, but we suspect the rigour of the law is occasionally, in certain districts of Chorlton-on-Medlock, maintained at the expense of its majesty, and the letter sacrificed to the spirit. General case in point. All tenants of precarious livelihoods are looked upon with perpetual suspicion of insolvency by landlords and tax collectors, and of all tenants with precarious livelihoods, lodging-house keepers are regarded with the keenest suspicion. In Chorlton-on-Medlock there are whole colonies of these

lodging-house keepers. They are generally widows, or elderly maiden ladies, or wives whose husbands are invalids or drunkards. Their aim in life is, by frantic efforts, to keep the wolf from the door and themselves from the workhouse. Their nightmares are rent and taxes. It seems hard lines for them that they should have to pay heavy black mail in the shape of poor rates, for the privilege of being allowed to struggle to keep clear of that last infirmary of noble minds, "the house." But worse still, they are the tax collector's pet bugbear. No quarter is allowed; summary measures are taken, and a summons at once served if payment be not prompt. Particular case in point. A spinster, afflicted with lodgers, being pressed for payment of a poor rate of four or five pounds, agreed to pay two-thirds down, and the rest within a fortnight. No objection was made at the time, but two or three days had not passed before she was served with a summons to pay the deficit! Very smart, no doubt, but is not this a mistaken policy, tending to drive to the workhouse the very people who work hard to keep out of it? Further, if she were totally unable to pay the rate just then, would not a swoop be at once made on her drawing room suite, to knock down at Knot Mill for a fifth of its value? What would then be left, when her tools and stock-in-trade are gone, but the workhouse, where she would be a tax on the community instead of earning her own livelihood? Surely in such cases the rigour of the law might be relaxed a little, and some opportunity of paying by instalments be given the honest women, nay, often ladies, who take in lodgers?

THE CITY COUNCIL AND TRAMWAYS.

We are sorry to see the General Purposes Committee have come to a decision against tramways. To their opinion that the corporation ought to lay them down, we have no objection whatsoever, but it will be too bad if the inhabitants are to be altogether deprived of one of the advantages of civilization through an ignorant conservatism on the part of their representatives. Everywhere that rails have been tried, they have been favourably regarded; so to object to them here, without experience of them, is simply stupidness. Of course, one cannot expect the very newest and best views in an incorporated public body, and when steam-engines for streets are coming in, the corporation may begin to think about laying down tramways. Sir Joseph Whitworth advocates the steam engine, and there can be no doubt that we are coming to it. But the somewhat corpulent public can't stand the notion of street steam-engines just yet, and there is no reason why their advocates should not approve of tramways. They are a long step in that direction; and as for the expense of laying them down, that will be recouped long before steam-engines come in. And even were it not, what is to prevent the steam-engines from running on the tracks laid down for omnibuses? It should be understood that the General Purposes Committee have not decided that they disapprove of tramways: what they say, amounts to this—we won't take the trouble to form an opinion on this subject ourselves, but we'll put every obstacle in the way of those who *have* taken that trouble.

THE MORDAUNT CASE AND THE ENGLISH ARISTOCRACY.

The British public really can't stand much more of this. The feeling with which recent revelations have inspired it has got past curiosity, a good way on to what is much more like disgust. And a very wholesome thing, too. We cannot agree with the general opinion that the publication of this sort of matter does no good. We want a little more of this sort of matter publishing, to make people know how much of it exists. Mr. Percy Fitzgerald got finely abused, not so long ago, because, in *All The Year Round*, he indicated that the existence of the Alhambra was recognized in several ways by ladies of high degree. Well, the British public doesn't object to ladies of the aristocracy going upon occasion to the Alhambra, and it will howl down the audacious scribe who ventures to insinuate such a thing; but they ought to leave their footmen at home. So with other practices. Any amount of immorality the British public can tolerate: what the British public cannot tolerate is, immorality that gets found out. If revelations go on at the rate they have been going on, we'll have a republic.

A "SWEEPING" REFORM AT THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

There is a cobweb—there are still several cobwebs—at the Free Grammar School, which would be the better for a touch of a modern broom. It is not generally known that a "splendid shilling" is paid as a honorarium into the hands of the two head scholars by every boy who enters the school. In return for this they enter his name on the register. The origin of this custom is illustrative at once of the homeliness of old days, and the estimation in which learning was then held. Hugh Oldham, in his will, directed that two *poor* scholars should sweep out and keep clean the school he founded. With this post they were to combine the office of registrars, and for it receive, beside their education, one penny from every boy who entered the school. It is needless to say that the two head scholars do not doff a "threadbare cope," roll up their shirt sleeves, don a housemaid's apron, and consume the evening gas in the use of broom, floorcloth, mop, or duster. Why then draw money for service not rendered? Give, by all means, a small yearly exhibition to the two head boys, but do not perpetuate a sham.

[STUDIES IN NATURAL HISTORY.]

THE PRISON HUMOURIST.

THERE have been during recent years such great changes in the historical estimate of the character of Henry VIII., Mary Queen of Scots, Oliver Cromwell, William Penn, and John Bright, that it is with a very tremulous hand, and not without emotion, that I take up the theme of the Prison Humourist. About this eminent personage I fancy I shall be all right perhaps this week, perhaps next, perhaps even the week after next, nay, even up to the Easter Recess; but after that? In History we cannot take our longitude from Greenwich unless it be in regard to our ears, the longitude of which many writers of history have decided for us. Have we not all of us been latterly convinced what a quaking bog in the matter of History there is under us, and do we not sometimes feel rather more secure as to the world before the flood than about the world of Edward the Sixth or of George the First? With reverence be it written, may there not be a good time coming for the character of Judas Iscariot and Judge Jeffreys, and many malefactors and improper persons whose heads have been gibbeted on the finger posts of the past? Impressed with these ideas, we touch with gingerly fingers the Prison Humourist. Like all the specimens in our museum, he must be taken in his generic, and not in his individual capacity. We cannot pretend to deal with individuals. That would not be expedient. If the Prison Humourist be not a noun of multitude, neither is he a noun singular.

I will give you one instance of the Prison Humourist. Many years ago, a boy under seventeen years of age, resident in a suburb of a northern city, murdered a companion about the same age. This was the verdict of a coroner's jury, who decided that the victim had been murdered; this was also the verdict of twelve good and true men at the assizes, who well and truly tried, and who found that the murderer was guilty. The judge, with black cap and grave face and grim advice, sentenced the youthful culprit to death, and he was taken to the place from whence he came, etcetera, etcetera. Though it be allotted unto all men once to die, and though spiritual consolation by reason thereof is the urgent need of all, yet it is perhaps not to be wondered at that, upon those whose time is fixed specifically and whose time is short, the pressure of spiritual consolation should be redoubled. The theory is that an extra parson power should be applied to the condemned culprit, and no exertion be spared to fit him for his momentous change. The Ordinary of the Gaol took the prisoner in hand at once. If he had been going to live, there would have been no hurry: as he was going to die, the case was very different. At that time of day—happily not now—the exertions of the chaplain were generally supplemented by the Prison Humourist, who had not merely the happy faculty of worming a confession out of the criminal if it

were possible, but, if it were not possible, of getting him into what was called "a comfortable state of mind." In this particular case, if we remember rightly, there was not much doubt about the facts—the only question was as to the amount of malice aforethought and the circumstances immediately preceding the fatal blow. The youth both of the murderer and his victim was considered, and strong efforts were made to get a commutation of the capital sentence. Meanwhile, the Prison Humourist had quietly put the Ordinary aside, and had worked the culprit himself. A better or more promising case the Humourist declared he had never met with. Speaking of the poor lad as you would of a pugilist or a racehorse, the Humourist declared that he was "quite fit," so that when it was bruited abroad that great exertions on behalf of the commutation were being made, it was high time for the Humourist to take the field. Accordingly he took it. He went to the leading persons who were praying the mercy of the Crown and gravely rebuked them, saying that the boy was quite happy, that his peace was made, that the world for him—whatever he (the culprit) might say to the contrary—was virtually a closed book, and that it would be a pity to disturb his enviable condition by the respite of the capital sentence.

That of which I write now as an illustration was a reality not twenty years ago. Am I wrong in calling the prohanger a humourist? He did not want the boy's blood. He was not a bloodthirsty man in any sense, not a revengeful man at all, but his perception of things had become so addled that he thought it would be better for the culprit to be hanged off in his then frame of mind than that he should live, and perhaps suffer a relapse. The Home Office was of a different opinion, and the boy was respited. But I confess I have never felt cordially towards the Humourist since. He is now a well-known character, and puts P.H. after his name. In personal appearance he is clerical, but in reality he is only lay. It is, of course, difficult to conceive of the feelings of a man who is going to be hanged within a fortnight, who sees, as it were, through the windows of his cell the boundless upheaving eternity waiting to engulph him. I have tried to realize it when I have seen the Humourist in the street, and wondered how I would like the square unexpressive features of that functionary as companions of my latest moments. I am afraid I should feel resentful towards the H. So square and (shall I call it?) so wooden a philanthropy would not tend to compose my feelings. There could indeed be no companionship or sympathy in the matter at all, for the best of all reasons: because the H. was not going to be hanged himself. And then, what if I knew that, within an hour or so of these consolations, the Humourist had been inferentially pleading for my execution? Surely he might have allowed me a little choice in a matter so personal to myself! Have, then, humanity and Christianity at last come into conflict? Better far to act, with spiritual agencies and swift reformatory drugs, upon the thousand and one boys in the streets who are now wicked boys, and hang them off when they are ready, *before* they commit murder and not afterwards.

There always appeared to me a coarseness in the philanthropy of the Humourist. I never could listen to the plea that it would be a painful duty to him to attend these condemned people; on the contrary I felt that he enjoyed it, and if therein I did him an injustice, I beg to apologize. Morbid curiosity there was in it all I feel sure. It was a vanity to believe that he was the proper man to soothe the last moments of these culprits. It was an imposition to believe that after having attended two or three he had acquired any particular skill in coaching a fourth—that the fourth would feel matters going easier with him on that account. It was a deception to try to make it out that the prisoner wished for the Humourist particularly. That the Gaol Chaplains should have had no objection to their melancholy and horrid work being mitigated can excite no surprise. They were men of delicacy and humanity, and they stood readily aside. The so called cosy and comfortable treatment adopted by the Humourist seems, too, preeminently revolting. Society had said this man shall suffer the death. He is a loathsome person, and must be put out of the way. The Humourist dissents. Whilst agreeing with society in the main, and not, as we have seen, desiring in the least to save the culprit's life, he nevertheless takes hold of the murderer's hand, enquires after his health and comfort, pities him, makes friends with him, but still hangs him. Assuredly this is not Philanthropy under its loveliest aspect I dislike a man getting any credit for it, and I hope we have seen the last of it. Never in my remembrance have I known of a single instance in which the man who now writes P.H. after his name, interfered vigorously between the law and its victim, or in which, on the contrary, he did not negatively oppose all efforts of the sort. Such intervention naturally would not have suited his book. His occupation would have been gone: his reputation as a "preparer" would have died out.

Our vision upon all these things has been, I fear, an oblique one. The clergy have been denouncing compulsion in educational affairs. But can there be anything more awful than the compulsion which was applied the other week to that wretched man Gregson, in order, within the short space of three weeks, to make him think and feel like a Christian? And yet, were we not by implication taught to believe it had been done? Gregson was a raw brute until the sentence of death, but the instant afterwards a rapid process of conversion was tried upon him by the Prison Humourists. This man could neither read nor write. His life had been one series of debauchery, violence, and crime. He had been in and out of gaol almost continuously. The intervals were filled up with brutal attacks upon his wife, whom he ultimately kicked to death. If this man, during his boyhood, had been seized by a police-officer and dropped into a school, parsondom would have wailed over the decline of English freedom. When afterwards he was seized by a policeman and strangled, parsondom applauded the compulsion which is supposed to have opened to him the way of salvation. The Prison Humourists always appear to us to arrive so extremely late!

WHAT TO EAT, AND HOW TO COOK IT.

DINNER: JOINTS AND VEGETABLES.

HAVING now discussed our soup and fish, about which latter, however, we could have said much more had space permitted, we will pass to the more solid parts of our dinner. Entrées, next in order, as such we shall discard, for our imaginary menu contains but two dishes at the most, generally indeed but one, for whatever constellations shine over that first and truest domestic hearth, the kitchen, all revolve round that fixed light—the pole-star of Economy—or wander into space and are lost.

We must confess to a most unsentimental weakness. We like Roast Beef. What "the roast beef of old England" was we do not know, but judging from what we have read and heard of the breeding and feeding of cattle in former days, even without going very far back, we should say that it was decidedly inferior to that of the present day. Turned out upon ill drained rushy fields or leys, stall feeding and roots all but unknown, the poor beast was long before Christmas "killed to save its life," and salted, corned, or hung for the consumption of the next three or four months. Who eats hung beef now? When could

he get it if he wanted to do so? No, whatever the wisdom of our ancestors was, it did not lie in providing material for the table, nor how to cook it. We have improved upon them at least in that. Neither from Mrs. Raffald's medley, of which there was "a new edition" *before* the allied armies entered Paris, nor in the still older omnium-gatherum of Mrs. Glasse, is there any reason to suppose that such a thing as a piece of ribs of beef ever existed! *Now*, it stands alone in our opinion, the round and top of sovereignty, the dish—facile princeps—chiefest of the table. The sirloin, it is true, is knightly fare, but the ribs are royal. It is dear, certainly, that is, high-priced, but it is because people have acquiesced in giving nearly any price that the butcher takes it into his head to ask, for it is not long since that a little concerted remonstrance from the public brought it down from a shilling or more to its present price of ninepence-halfpenny.

There is one thing to be done with a piece of beef, and we are now speaking of sirloin as well as of ribs, before it is cooked, about which there is much either of neglect or prejudice. Whether you buy it one day and cook it the next, or after several days, sprinkle a little fine salt all over it the day before it is to be cooked. Don't rub it in, or make any attempt at a pickle of it, but just rain a fine shower over it, and the improved flavour will to-morrow reward you. We have often been surprised at the comparatively insipid taste of roast beef at some private tables, and at most of the restaurants and dining-rooms in Manchester, and have found the people imbued with a superstitious dread of salt. All sorts of reasons will be alleged for not using it, one of the most foolish we ever heard being "that it draws out the gravy," for it does not, crede experto. Now a piece of beef of this kind must be roasted; not baked, but roasted before the fire in a common hastener, one of those made of tin, with a kind of lantern-tower, with bottle-jack instead of a bell. Previous to "laying it down," as it used to be called, before the fire, dredge the meat with a little flour all over; then hang it before a clear red fire, without ashes or smoky coals, not so near that the outside will be scorched and cinders drop into the pan, but at that moderate distance which practice at your own fire-place can alone tell you. After that is done it only requires, besides a little attention, basting. That is the grand secret of good roasting—constant basting. As soon as the dripping begins to collect in the pan, lade it with a spoon over the meat. Do so frequently until the meat is done. This basting, we may here remark, is applicable to everything that is roasted before the fire or baked in the oven, and is the only way to keep in the gravy and all the juices of the meat, as well as give a rich appearance to the outside. A rough rule for the time a joint will take to roast is a quarter of an hour to a pound. But, beyond six or seven pounds, there is a reduction in taking a quantity, as the Bristol tradesman says; for a piece of twelve pounds weight will be well done in two hours and a half. He or she who now thinks that all that remains is to send it to table sins, and richly (it is a good word) deserves punishment, gravi pœna. For where is the gravy? So the beef being enough, we will hasten, before it is over done, to make the gravy. Take down the meat, and put it on a dish before the fire. Take out the dripping-pan, and pour off the dripping from the gravy lying at the bottom. Pour a little boiling water—a teacup-full of that in which the potatoes have been boiled is the best—over the pan, and rub the pan with a spoon, so as to dislodge the brown gravy which sticks to it. Next mix a little flour with cold water, add the gravy to it, and boil it in a small pan, and, when it is the right thickness and colour, pour it, through a sieve, over the meat, and then the sooner your joint goes to table the better. These directions will answer, with little variety, for all kinds of roast meat, mutton, veal, lamb, or pork, and whether done in the oven or before the fire. The gravy for veal or lamb, or any that seems to require it, may be colouredwith a little sugar in the manner explained in our remarks on soup.

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were possible, but, if it were not possible, of getting him into what was called "a comfortable state of mind." In this particular case, if we remember rightly, there was not much doubt about the facts—the only question was as to the amount of malice aforethought and the circumstances immediately preceding the fatal blow. The youth both of the murderer and his victim was considered, and strong efforts were made to get a commutation of the capital sentence. Meanwhile, the Prison Humourist had quietly put the Ordinary aside, and had worked the culprit himself. A better or more promising case the Humourist declared he had never met with. Speaking of the poor lad as you would of a pugilist or a racehorse, the Humourist declared that he was "quite fit," so that when it was bruited abroad that great exertions on behalf of the commutation were being made, it was high time for the Humourist to take the field. Accordingly he took it. He went to the leading persons who were praying the mercy of the Crown and gravely rebuked them, saying that the boy was quite happy, that his peace was made, that the world for him—whatever he (the culprit) might say to the contrary—was virtually a closed book, and that it would be a pity to disturb his enviable condition by the respite of the capital sentence.

That of which I write now as an illustration was a reality not twenty years ago. Am I wrong in calling the prohanger a humourist? He did not want the boy's blood. He was not a bloodthirsty man in any sense, not a revengeful man at all, but his perception of things had become so addled that he thought it would be better for the culprit to be hanged off in his then frame of mind than that he should live, and perhaps suffer a relapse. The Home Office was of a different opinion, and the boy was respited. But I confess I have never felt cordially towards the Humourist since. He is now a well-known character, and puts P.H. after his name. In personal appearance he is clerical, but in reality he is only lay. It is, of course, difficult to conceive of the feelings of a man who is going to be hanged within a fortnight, who sees, as it were, through the windows of his cell the boundless upheaving eternity waiting to engulph him. I have tried to realize it when I have seen the Humourist in the street, and wondered how I would like the square unexpressive features of that functionary as companions of my latest moments. I am afraid I should feel resentful towards the H. So square and (shall I call it?) so wooden a philanthropy would not tend to compose my feelings. There could indeed be no companionship or sympathy in the matter at all, for the best of all reasons: because the H. was not going to be hanged himself. And then, what if I knew that, within an hour or so of these consolations, the Humourist had been inferentially pleading for my execution? Surely he might have allowed me a little choice in a matter so personal to myself! Have, then, humanity and Christianity at last come into conflict? Better far to act, with spiritual agencies and swift reformatory drugs, upon the thousand and one boys in the streets who are now wicked boys, and hang them off when they are ready, *before* they commit murder and not afterwards.

There always appeared to me a coarseness in the philanthropy of the Humourist. I never could listen to the plea that it would be a painful duty to him to attend these condemned people; on the contrary I felt that he enjoyed it, and if therein I did him an injustice, I beg to apologize. Morbid curiosity there was in it all I feel sure. It was a vanity to believe that he was the proper man to soothe the last moments of these culprits. It was an imposition to believe that after having attended two or three he had acquired any particular skill in coaching a fourth—that the fourth would feel matters going easier with him on that account. It was a deception to try to make it out that the prisoner wished for the Humourist particularly. That the Gaol Chaplains should have had no objection to their melancholy and horrid work being mitigated can excite no surprise. They were men of delicacy and humanity, and they stood readily aside. The so called cosy and comfortable treatment adopted by the Humourist seems, too, preeminently revolting. Society had said this man shall suffer the death. He is a loathsome person, and must be put out of the way. The Humourist dissents. Whilst agreeing with society in the main, and not, as we have seen, desiring in the least to save the culprit's life, he nevertheless takes hold of the murderer's hand, enquires after his health and comfort, pities him, makes friends with him, but still hangs him. Assuredly this is not Philanthropy under its loveliest aspect I dislike a man getting any credit for it, and I hope we have seen the last of it. Never in my remembrance have I known of a single instance in which the man who now writes P.H. after his name, interfered vigorously between the law and its victim, or in which, on the contrary, he did not negatively oppose all efforts of the sort. Such intervention naturally would not have suited his book. His occupation would have been gone: his reputation as a "preparer" would have died out.

Our vision upon all these things has been, I fear, an oblique one. The clergy have been denouncing compulsion in educational affairs. But can there be anything more awful than the compulsion which was applied the other week to that wretched man Gregson, in order, within the short space of three weeks, to make him think and feel like a Christian? And yet, were we not by implication taught to believe it had been done? Gregson was a raw brute until the sentence of death, but the instant afterwards a rapid process of conversion was tried upon him by the Prison Humourists. This man could neither read nor write. His life had been one series of debauchery, violence, and crime. He had been in and out of gaol almost continuously. The intervals were filled up with brutal attacks upon his wife, whom he ultimately kicked to death. If this man, during his boyhood, had been seized by a police-officer and dropped into a school, parsondom would have wailed over the decline of English freedom. When afterwards he was seized by a policeman and strangled, parsondom applauded the compulsion which is supposed to have opened to him the way of salvation. The Prison Humourists always appear to us to arrive so extremely late!

WHAT TO EAT, AND HOW TO COOK IT.

DINNER: JOINTS AND VEGETABLES.

HAVING now discussed our soup and fish, about which latter, however, we could have said much more had space permitted, we will pass to the more solid parts of our dinner. Entrées, next in order, as such we shall discard, for our imaginary menu contains but two dishes at the most, generally indeed but one, for whatever constellations shine over that first and truest domestic hearth, the kitchen, all revolve round that fixed light—the pole-star of Economy—or wander into space and are lost.

We must confess to a most unsentimental weakness. We like Roast Beef. What "the roast beef of old England" was we do not know, but judging from what we have read and heard of the breeding and feeding of cattle in former days, even without going very far back, we should say that it was decidedly inferior to that of the present day. Turned out upon ill drained rushy fields or leys, stall feeding and roots all but unknown, the poor beast was long before Christmas "killed to save its life," and salted, corned, or hung for the consumption of the next three or four months. Who eats hung beef now? When could

he get it if he wanted to do so? No, whatever the wisdom of our ancestors was, it did not lie in providing material for the table, nor how to cook it. We have improved upon them at least in that. Neither from Mrs. Raffald's medley, of which there was "a new edition" *before* the allied armies entered Paris, nor in the still older omnium-gatherum of Mrs. Glasse, is there any reason to suppose that such a thing as a piece of ribs of beef ever existed! *Now*, it stands alone in our opinion, the round and top of sovereignty, the dish—facile princeps—chiefest of the table. The sirloin, it is true, is knightly fare, but the ribs are royal. It is dear, certainly, that is, high-priced, but it is because people have acquiesced in giving nearly any price that the butcher takes it into his head to ask, for it is not long since that a little concerted remonstrance from the public brought it down from a shilling or more to its present price of ninepence-halfpenny.

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A "STRANGER" AT THE CONCERT HALL.

WE are not one of the "noble six hundred" who subscribe their guineas to the institution at the corner of Lower Mosley Street, but one evening we represented, in a very inoffensive way, one of the twelve hundred listeners that the hall will hold. Before going, we consulted a guide to Manchester, and found therein a short notice, that told us more than probably nine-tenths of the subscribers themselves know. When we stepped out of the carriage and entered the building, we were absolutely big with facts, and our friend who had given us the necessary ticket seemed puzzled that we should know so much. *He* didn't know that the room we were entering was a hundred and ten feet long, and fifty feet wide; nor that the building, with its "handsome stone frontage of the Corinthian order," was designed by Messrs. Hayley and Brown, forty years ago. We told him for the first time about the old Concert Rooms in Fountain Street and York Street, that were erected before his father was born, seventy years ago, and established "exclusively for the promotion of the science and art of music."

But there were many things which he did know. It was no news to tell him the amount he had paid in order to qualify as a subscriber, or to enumerate the privileges which the pecuniary hemorrhage conferred on him. He had not forgotten the time when he was proposed in writing by two subscribers, not members of the committee, and when the necessary two-thirds of the votes were announced favourable to his admission as a member. It seemed but yesterday that his name, for the four long weeks before the day of election, appeared on the Book of Candidates, like a premature record of an unaccomplished fact; and, indeed, he himself informed us, what we had before read, that any gentleman whose hearthstone is situated within a radius of sixteen miles of Manchester cannot consider himself a stranger, nor can he be admitted to any concert unless he spends his money on that which is not bread, and adds his name to the list of subscribers. We found, too, that gentlemen having places of business in Manchester are classed as residents. Officers in the army and navy and clergymen may always be admitted by a stranger's ticket, wherever the centre from which their domestic circle is struck may happen to be. Then the ticket specifies clearly that no gentleman will be admitted unless he appears in evening dress, and that any insane idea of giving variety to the costume will lead to an ejectment. The court dress of the North American Indians would not be considered full dress. Every one must be caparisoned *à la* waiter, and must confine himself to black and white. Now black is not a cheerful colour, and hence it happens that a gentleman in evening dress fortunate enough to be surrounded by ladies in white opera cloaks looks very like a spot of ink on a table cloth.

A number of these black spots were walking about the vestibule of the Concert Hall when we entered, disposing of overcoats and hats and putting on their white gloves. This vestibule, with its red carpet, looks a very comfortable sort of place, and we are doubtful whether some of the black spots we saw there would ever get beyond it, if the cloak room should be one day converted into a refreshment room. At present, however, the attraction was up stairs, and so up we went, past the entrance to the body of the hall, into the gallery above. Immediately we looked down into the valley of flowers, we felt a shock as we do when we hear instruments out of tune. We instantly thought of O'Neill's picture Before Waterloo, and turned cold. We were looking on dead splendour, magnificence in mourning. Here a cluster of Ophelias in white; there a few Hamlets in sable; brides and undertakers; fragments of rainbow and sunset on a midnight sky, patterned out in rigid lines, and almost motionless. There were waving lines of faces along the sides of the hall, and a dark sea of heads in the middle; and beyond, the picture was finished by a cold, bare, dirty-brown orchestra, that made us shut our eyes, and imagine what we would do with some red carpet and a paint brush. If we looked on the walls with their pilasters and panels, or on the ceiling with its black iron gratings and dull enrichments, we instinctively sighed for paint. If we looked through our glass at the faces of the fair, we found ourselves sighing *at* paint; and we almost audibly wished we could renew the one and remove the other; that the eye may be pleased by the harmony of colour, while the ear is enraptured by the harmony of sound; and that in looking on a woman's face we should see it, as it pleases us best to see it, uncoloured, save by that truthful colouring that comes from the heart.

It is tiresome to wait long for anything, but this evening time passed quickly enough, for the scene was new to us, and we had plenty to see and think about. Our friend pointed out to us a tall gentleman with diamond studs as the Alderman from the Nile, and very well he looked; a young lady who, to speak after the manner of some of our poets, had nose red tipt, but was worth lots of money; an artist who dreamt of lurid skies and dull leaden waves, and sent his dreams to the Institution; an old gentleman who invariably slept through the whole performance, and awoke bad tempered; an accomplished musician who sat, book in hand, to watch for the beauties or the blemishes of the performance; an architect who had had one or two narrow escapes of becoming famous; a shoal of merchant princes, who qualified for their present royal position by earning in early life portions of a crown a day, and no more; a charming old lady who had buried three husbands and still looked hopefully to the future, believing all was for the best; young ladies who were beautiful but not rich; young gentlemen who were not handsome but poor; old sinners who had dispensed smiles for fifty years, but who had hitherto smiled only to deceive, and who evidently intended to pursue the same tactics to the end. There they were assembled in a brilliant crowd, buds and fading flowers. Young eyes looking for the future, old eyes looking at the past. So it was here as in every crowd, something very ridiculous and something almost sublime mingle with it and we are happy; contemplate it and we are sad.

Then the time for commencing arrived, and the dull, dead-looking orchestra seemed to swarm with living forms, with black apparel and brown fiddles, pale faces and white shirt fronts; very happy looking, and in the aggregate, musical. Pictorially speaking, the effect was positively funereal. One could have fancied they came to play requiems over a burst drum, or to mourn the loss of a second fiddle, or to wail over the remains of a defunct trombone. But not so; they were there to fill that hall, and the souls that listened, with the inspirations of the world's greatest Masters, and to give to us some of the loveliest melody ever heard out of heaven. There is something very striking about Mr. Charles Hallé's appearance. He has a face and head which once seen you never forget. There he stood tapping the music stand with his bâton to secure silence, and tapping it again to make all ready, and then extending his gloved hands as if blessing the instruments, he broke the silence he had made with the glorious melody of Beethoven. In a moment like this, every ear listens and every heart responds. The skeletons in a thousand cupboards are forgotten. Some of the divinities seemed entranced, and some appeared to dream, while old gentlemen looked vacantly down on the ground, either in immoveable enjoyment or in abstruse calculations of certain influences on 40's twist. Some men's earth never gets very near to heaven; so there are some of our angels who never rise much above the cold clay.

Beethoven's symphony ended as all beautiful creations do end, and down came the fiddles. There was very little applause. Clapping the hands bursts the gloves, and does not make enough noise to indicate an enthusiastic appreciation of the performance. Very few men have sufficient confidence in their voices to shout "Bravo!" and stamping of feet is somewhat too vulgar for an assembly so highly cultivated and select as that of the Concert Hall. Then came the next piece on the programme. Nelson Varley sang, Miss Zimmermann played, and Mdlle. Carola "made passionate our sense of hearing." There must have been joy in the band of Hallé when the interval came. Those right hands must have been tired of bowing, and the cheeks of those ancient cherubs must have been tired of blowing. Music does not quench thirst. It therefore happened that when the musicians disappeared, a number of unattached young gentlemen, brothers who had accompanied sisters under protest, husbands who had not been able to linger over their dinner, and others who were accustomed to refreshments about the ninth hour, disappeared also, and might have been seen searching for great-coats and hats in the entrance hall below. When they returned, the wiser of them were fragrant with sherry, the more foolish were unfragrant with beer. The interval within the hall passed quickly enough. There was a great deal of talking, and a profuse display of smiles; dresses were critically examined and discussed; the arrangement of hair received much attention; and the different faces were carefully scrutinised. The summing up by the ladies was unfavourable to the belief in the existence of female loveliness; and the verdict of the gentlemen dead against the absurd notion of there being two handsome men present.

Then Mr. Hallé again appeared with his magic wand, commanded silence, and, having obtained it, proceeded at once to break it. So, for another hour there came over us a flood of delicious music; for another hour the trances and dreams remained, and that old gentleman slept. Then came the last chord, and the last echo sank into the great silence, and was lost for ever. The fiddles were put into their cribs, and the flutes into their cases; the performers vanished as silently as they had come, and again the orchestra looked cold and dead. Down into the entrance hall poured that stream of loveliness and beautiless; lovely as the combined power of art and science could make them, beautiless as age and care could mould them. And there were hurried greetings and farewells, shouts by liveried servants, and the sound of carriage wheels and horses' tread, coming in snatches through the opening doors; and the rustling of robes, and the going of those who were called, and the shivering of those who waited, and the hoarse proclamation "Mr. Williams's carriage," and our own "Good night!"

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TO THE EDITOR OF THE SPHINX.

SIR,—I feel highly honoured by the frequent notice of my letters, even in a satirical vein, and I am delighted to find they afford you such a fund of amusement, Let me assure you that your strictures from time to time have created no little fun and pleasantry here, especially that of last Saturday, the witticisms and racy humour of which, on its being read aloud by myself to a group on 'Change, convulsed us all with laughter. Now I so keenly relish this kind of thing, that I shall be obliged by your sending me, or saying where I can procure, future numbers containing articles upon this topic, whether concerning other "tipsters" or, sir, yours truly,

Liverpool, Feb. 18th, 1870. W. L. BROWN.

[The *Sphinx* can be obtained in Liverpool at any of the bookstalls of Messrs. W. H. Smith & Son.]

THE VOLUNTEERS AND "SOCIAL STATUS."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SPHINX.

SIR,—At a recent meeting of volunteer officers in Manchester, Captain J. W. Maclure is reported to have said that "the social status of some volunteer officers was below what it ought to be; commissions had been scattered about the country too loosely." It is quite possible that when Mr. Maclure made this statement, he was not alive to the full significance of the facts embodied in his words. Probably he looked at the subject from a social point of view. His respectability was in danger, and he objected to rub shoulders with shopkeepers who claimed to be gentlemen on the strength of a Lord Lieutenant's commission. I am not defending Captain Maclure. He is big enough to do that himself. But it is morally certain that if he was not speaking from facts, he in the language of Wimbledon made a fluke, *i.e.*, while aiming at the moon he has hit the bull's eye. A man who has made his money behind the counter—or a man who has only sufficient money to purchase a commission, may succeed in a regiment of the line. There he is hedged round by discipline, and must receive all respect from his subordinates, but in a volunteer regiment the special code, which enjoins obedience on the part of the rank and file and respect to their officers, is like a rope of sand. It must not be tested too heavily, or a fiasco is inevitable. If there are means for punishing looseness of discipline, they are either too troublesome, or the offended parties knowledge of them is so hazy, he hesitates to use them. I have seen a volunteer officer "cheeked" in a manner which, if tried on to a corporal in a line regiment, would ensure the delinquent heavy penance. There have been cases of expulsion from the corps, but this is not sufficient punishment. Fancy the feelings of the captain who commanded a company of Yorkshire volunteers at a review lately. The company numbered amongst its awkward ones an obstinate old fellow who was the captain's landlord. Being bent on keeping a "step" of his own, and performing his right-about-face in a unique style peculiar to himself, to the confusion of the drill, he coolly informed his *tenant*, who ventured to remonstrate with him on the impropriety of his proceedings, that if he didn't let him alone he'd raise his rent. The officer was silenced. He dared not, like Cornelius Agrippa's apprentice, raise a demon which he could not lay.

There are many reasons why a man who aspires to a volunteer commission should possess plenty of cash. The Government allowance to the force is too small to meet all expenses, and various dodges have to be resorted to to raise funds—entertainments, bazaars, and other similar methods, which, although inevitable if the officers are not able to shell out, lower the dignity of the service. Some officers, who can boast crack companies of irreproachable military morals, have spent fabulous sums in attaining their desideratum. But let one of insufficient means experimentalize on his company. Let him try to run his hobby-horse along smoothly, without occasionally administering oil to its wheels, in the shape of donations to the funds and treats to the men whom he wishes to attend drills unremittingly, in order to attain the position of "cracks." Let him try this, without possessing in plenty that which your true Briton venerates, ready cash, and the result will be—verily, is it not written in the hundreds of resignations sent in by disgusted officers, and consigned to immortal print in the correspondence columns of the *Times*, and other newspapers—failure.—Yours respectfully, PHONO.

The Schleswig-Holstein affair gave occasion to a good *mot* of Lord Palmerston's. He said: "Only two men ever did understand this question—another gentleman and I. The other gentleman is dead. He explained it to me, but I have forgotten all about it."

WESLEY AND HIS WIFE.—John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, married a widow, who, through her jealousy, led him a life of wretchedness and misery. At last his spirit was up, and he wrote to her, "Know me and know yourself. Suspect me no more; provoke me no more; do not any longer contend for mastery, for power, money, or praise; be content to be a private insignificant person—known and loved by God and me." It was not likely that a woman would be pleased at being recommended to be an insignificant person. After twenty years of disquietude she one day left him. He bore it philosophically. He went even beyond it—he took his diary, and put the most pithy entry into it I ever met in a diary:—"*Non eam reliqui, non demisi, non revocabo*," which may be translated thus: "I did not leave her; I did not send her away; I shan't send for her back." And so ended the married life of John Wesley.

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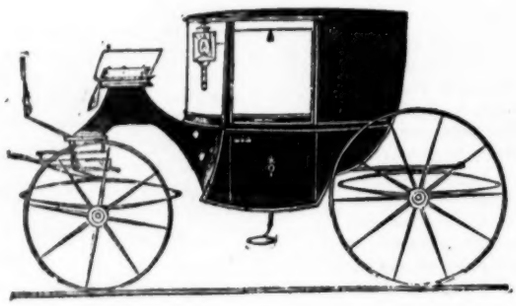

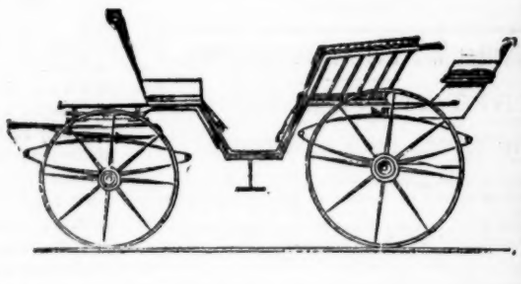

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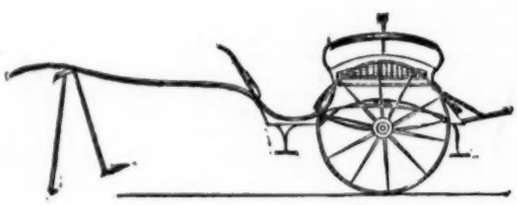

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J. R. received the special commendation of the Judges at the Royal Agricultural Society's Meeting held in Manchester.

The POOR and their DWELLINGS.

WE learn from the report of Dr. Whitmore, the Medical Officer of Health for Marylebone, that for the past month the inhabitants of certain miserable houses in York Court, which were condemned some time ago under the Artisans' Dwellings Act, by the vestry, as unfit for human habitation, have taken the affair into their own hands, and have buried themselves in ripping up the flooring, tearing down the shutters and window sashes, and removing the doors, and even the laths from the walls and ceilings, for the purpose of providing themselves with fuel during the late inclement weather. Three of the houses are, it is stated, now entirely gutted, and are no longer inhabited, while the remainder of them, although still tenanted, are in the utmost state of dilapidation. These sensible people have set an example which may perhaps be followed by others who find themselves in hovels "unfit for habitation, and incapable of structural repair." At the present time we carefully preserve a host of fever nests, by leaving the question of their destruction to the discretion of the vestries and local boards; we have no central authority who will make these people do their duty; and until the lower classes show a determination to emerge from the dirt in which so many of them are condemned to wallow, there is little hope of any real improvement taking place in their condition.

LAMB AND COLERIDGE.—Coleridge was descanting, in the presence of Charles Lamb, upon the repulsive appearance of the oyster. "It isn't handsome, Coleridge," said Lamb; "but it has the advantage of you in one thing."—"What is that?" said Coleridge, who was an exhaustless talker. "It knows when to shut its mouth," was the reply. On another occasion the two were talking together on the incidents of Coleridge's early life, when he was beginning his career in the church, and Coleridge was describing some of the facts in his usual tone, when he paused, and said, "Pray, Mr. Lamb, did you ever hear me preach?"—"I never heard you do anything else," said Lamb.

TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

Communications should be addressed to the Editor, *Sphinx* Office, 37, Oxford Street, Manchester. Every manuscript should bear the name and address of the sender. All contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage. No replies or MSS. can be delivered on personal application.

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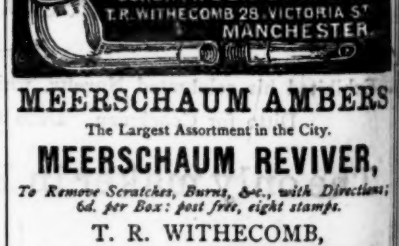

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